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BALLADS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ALFRED TENNYSON



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1880

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TO

ALFRED TENNYSON

MY GRANDSON

Golden-hair'd Ally whose name is one with mine,
Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,
Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,
Glorious poet who never hast written a line,
Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine.
May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine!

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THE FIRST QUARREL.

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.)

I.

'WAIT a little,' you say, 'you are sure it'll all come right,'
But the boy was born i' trouble, an' looks so wan an' so white:
Wait! an' once I ha' waited — I hadn't to wait for long.
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry. — No, no, you are doing me wrong!
Harry and I were married: the boy can hold up his head,
The boy was born in wedlock, but after my man was dead;
I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an' I work an' I wait to the end.
I am all alone in the world, an' you are my only friend.

II.

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you the tale o' my life.
When Harry an' I were children, he call'd me his own little wife;
I was happy when I was with him, an' sorry when he was away,
An' when we play'd together, I loved him better than play,

He workt me the daisy chain — he made me the cowslip ball,
He fought the boys that were rude an' I loved him better than all.
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at home in disgrace,
I never could quarrel with Harry — I had but to look in his face.

III.

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's kin, that had need
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he sent, an' the father agreed;
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire farm for years an' for years;
I walked with him down to the quay, poor lad, an' we parted in tears.
The boat was beginning to move, we heard them a-ringing the bell,
'I'll never love any but you, God bless you, my own little Nell.'

IV.

I was a child, an' he was a child, an' he came to harm;
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt with him up at the farm,
One had deceived her an' left her alone with her sin an' her shame,
And so she was wicked with Harry; the girl was the most to blame.

V.

And years went over till I that was little had grown so tall,
The men would say of the maids 'Our Nelly's the flower of 'em all.'
I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught myself all I could
To make a good wife for Harry, when Harry came home for good.

VI.

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as happy too,
For I heard it abroad in the fields 'I'll never love any but you;'
'I'll never love any but you' the morning song of the lark,
'I'll never love any but you' the nightingale's hymn in the dark.

VII.

And Harry came home at last, but he look'd at me sidelong and shy,
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so many years had gone by,
I had grown so handsome and tall — that I might ha' forgot him somehow —
For he thought — there were other lads — he was fear'd to look at me now.

VIII.

Hard was the frost in the field, we were married o' Christmas day,
Married among the red berries, an' all as merry as May —

Those were the pleasant times, my house an' my man were my pride,
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel a-sailing with wind an' tide.

IX.

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he tried the villages round,
So Harry went over the Solent to see if work could be found;
An' he wrote 'I ha' six weeks' work, little wife, so far as I know;
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an' kiss you before I go.'

X.

So I set to righting the house, for wasn't he coming that day?
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was push'd in a corner away,
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a letter along wi' the rest,
I had better ha' put my naked hand in a hornets' nest.

XI.

'Sweetheart' — this was the letter — this was the letter I read —
'You promised to find me work near you, an' I wish I was dead —

Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you haven't done it, my lad,
An' I almost died o' your going away, an' I wish that I had.'

XII.

I too wish that I had — in the pleasant times that had past,
Before I quarrell'd with Harry — *my* quarrel — the first an' the last.

XIII.

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the letter that drove me wild,
An' he told it me all at once, as simple as any child,
'What can it matter, my lass, what I did wi' my single life?
I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to his wife;
An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst.' 'Then,' I said, 'I'm none o' the best.'
An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my love? Come, come, little wife, let it rest!
The man isn't like the woman, no need to make such a stir.'
But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said 'You were keeping with her,
When I was a-loving you all along an' the same as before.'
An' he didn't speak for a while, an' he anger'd me more and more.
Then he patted my hand in his gentle way, 'Let bygones be!'
'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I said, 'when you married me!

By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she* — in her shame an' her sin —
You'll have her to nurse my child, if I die o' my lying in!
You'll make her its second mother! I hate her — an' I hate you!'
Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha' beaten me black an' blue
Than ha' spoken as kind as you did, when I were so crazy wi' spite,
'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it'll all come right.'

XIV.

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I watch'd him, an' when he came in
I felt that my heart was hard, he was all wet thro' to the skin,
An' I never said 'off wi' the wet,' I never said 'on wi' the dry,'
So I knew my heart was hard, when he came to bid me good-by.
'You said that you hated me, Ellen, but that isn't true, you know;
I am going to leave you a bit — you'll kiss me before I go?'

XV.

'Going! you're going to her — kiss her — if you will,' I said, —
I was near my time wi' the boy, I must ha' been light i' my head —

'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!'—I didn't know well what I meant,
But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he turn'd *his* face an' he went.

XVI.

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've gotten my work to do;
You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I never loved any but you;
I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for what she wrote,
I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-night by the boat.'

XVII.

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought of him out at sea,
An' I felt I had been to blame; he was always kind to me.
'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it'll all come right'—
An' the boat went down that night—the boat went down that night.

RIZPAH.

17—.

I.

Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—
And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother, come out to me.'
Why should he call me to-night, when he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

II.

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.
The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself drenched with the rain.

III.

Any thing fallen again? nay — what was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones, I have hidden them all.
What am I saying? and what are *you?* do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so must it lie.

IV.

Who let her in? how long has she been? you — what have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a word.
O — to pray with me — yes — a lady — none of their spies —
But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to darken my eyes.

V.

Ah — you, that have lived so soft, what should *you* know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep — you were only made for the day.
I have gather'd my baby together — and now you may go your way.

VI.

Nay — for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit by an old dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out to die.
'They dared me to do it,' he said, and he never has told me a lie.
I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he was but a child —
'The farmer dared me to do it,' he said; he was always so wild —
And idle — and couldn't be idle — my Willy — he never could rest.
The King should have made him a soldier, he would have been one of his best.

VII.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would
let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore
that he would;
And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when all
was done
He flung it among his fellows — I'll none of it, said my son.

VIII.

I came into court to the Judge and the lawyers. I told
them my tale,
God's own truth — but they kill'd him, they kill'd him for
robbing the mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show — we had always
borne a good name —
To be hang'd for a thief — and then put away — isn't that
enough shame?
Dust to dust — low down — let us hide! but they set him
so high
That all the ships of the world could stare at him, passing
by.
God'll pardon the hell-black raven and horrible fowls of
the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him and
hang'd him there.

IX.

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my last good-by;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. 'O mother!' I heard him cry.
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced me away.

X.

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up: they fasten'd me down on my bed.
'Mother, O mother!'—he call'd in the dark to me year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—you know that I couldn't but hear;
And then at the last they found I had grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again—but the creatures had worked their will.

XI.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you call it a theft?—

My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones that had laughed and had cried —
Theirs? O no! they are mine — not theirs — they had moved in my side.

XII.

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried 'em all —
I can't dig deep, I am old — in the night by the churchyard wall.
My Willy'll rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy ground.

XIII.

They would scratch him up — they would hang him again on the cursed tree.
Sin? O yes — we are sinners, I know — let all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good-will toward men —
'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord' — let me hear it again;
'Full of compassion and mercy — long-suffering.' Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder — the Saviour lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except for the worst of the worst,
And the first may be last — I have heard it in church — and the last may be first.

Suffering — O long-suffering — yes, as the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower and the snow.

XIV.

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never repented his sin.
How do they know it! are *they* his mother? are *you* of his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the downs began,
The wind that'll wail like a child, and the sea that'll moan like a man?

XV.

Election, Election and Reprobation — it's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in Hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has look'd into my care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy, I know not where.

XVI.

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire:
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to the fire?

I have been with God in the dark — go, go, you may leave me alone —
You never have borne a child — you are just as hard as a stone.

XVII.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice in the wind —
The snow and the sky so bright — he used but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church and not from the gibbet — for hark!
Nay — you can hear it yourself — it is coming — shaking the walls —
Willy — the moon's in a cloud —— Good night. I am going. He calls.

THE NORTHERN COBBLER.

I.

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur thou mun a' sights[1] to tell.
Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha sa 'arty an' well.

[1] The vowels *aï*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *craïin'*, *daïin'*, *whaï*, *aï*, (I) &c., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

'Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a vartical soon!'[1]
Strange fur to goä fur to think what saäilors a' seëan an' a' doon;
'Summat to drink — sa' 'ot?' I 'a nowt but Adam's wine:
What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to the 'eät o' the line?

II.

'What's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer?' I'll tell tha. Gin.
But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goä fur it down to the inn.
Naay — fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw tha was iver sa dry,
Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer, an' I'll tell tha why.

III.

Meä an' thy sister was married, when wur it? back-end o' June,
Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well as a fiddle i' tune:
I could fettle and clump owd booöts and shoes wi' the best on 'em all,
As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.
We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an' as 'appy as 'art could think,
An' then the babby wur burn, and then I taäkes to the drink.

IV.

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw I be hafe shaämed on it now,
We could sing a good song at the Plow, we could sing a good song at the Plow;

[1] The *oo* short, as in 'wood.'

Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an' hurted my huck,[1]
An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soometimes slaäpe down i' the squad an' the muck:
An' once I fowt wi' the Taäilor — not hafe ov a man, my lad —
Fur he scrawm'd an' scratted my faäce like a cat, an' it maäde 'er sa mad
That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,[2] an' raäted ma, 'Sottin' thy braäins
Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an' hawmin'[3] about i' the laänes,
Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not touch thy 'at to the Squire;'
An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse an' I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire;
But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus as droonk as a king,
Foälks' coostom flitted awaäy like a kite wi' a brokken string.

V.

An' Sally she wesh'd foälks' cloäths to keep the wolf fro' the door,
Eh but the moor she riled me, she druv me to drink the moor,
Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd, wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur 'id,
An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

[1] Hip. [2] Scold. [3] Lounging.

VI.

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a bull gotten loose at a faäir,
An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an' cryin' an' teärin' 'er 'aäir,
An' I tummled athurt the craädle an' sweär'd as I'd breäk ivry stick
O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied our Sally a kick,
An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs, an' she an' the babby beäl'd,[1]
Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did nor a mortal beäst o the feäld.

VII.

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I seeäd that our Sally went laämed
Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur dreädful ashaämed;
An' Sally wur sloomy[2] an' draggle-taäil'd in an owd turn gown,
An' the babby's faäce wurn't wesh'd an' the 'ole 'ouse hup-side down.

VIII.

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty an' neät an' sweeät,
Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower fro' 'eäd to feeät:
An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied 'er by Thursby thurn;
Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a Sunday at murn,
Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-mountin' oop 'igher an' 'igher,
An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e shined like a sparkle o' fire.

[1] Bellowed, cried out.

[2] Sluggish, out of spirits.

'Doesn't tha see 'im,' she axes, 'fur I can see 'im?' an' I
Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as danced in 'er pratty blue eye;
An' I says 'I mun gie tha a kiss,' an' Sally says 'Noä, thou moänt,'
But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother, an' Sally says 'doänt!'

IX.

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin', at fust she wur all in a tew,
But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn togither like birds on a beugh;
An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire an' the loov o' God fur men,
An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

X.

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like Saätan as fell
Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire — thaw theer's naw drinkin' i' Hell;
Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep' the wolf fro' the door,
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er as well as afoor.

XI.

Sa like a graät num-cumpus I blubber'd awaäy o' the bed —
'Weant niver do it naw moor;' an' Sally looökt up an' she said,
'I'll upowd it[1] tha weänt; thou'rt laike the rest o' the men,
Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till tha does it agëan.

[1] I'll uphold it.

Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I knaws, as knaws tha sa well,
That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im tha'll foller 'im slick into Hell.'

XII.

'Naäy,' says I, 'fur I weänt goä sniffin' about the tap.'
'Weänt tha?' she says, an' mysen I thowt i' mysen 'may-hap.'
'Noa:' an' I started awaäy like a shot, an' down to the Hinn,
An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin' theer, yon big black bottle o'gin.

XIII.

'That caps owt,'[1] says Sally, an' saw she begins to cry,
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says to 'er, 'Sally,' says I,
'Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the Lord an' the power ov 'is Graäce,
Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll looök my hennemy straït i' the faäce,
Stan' 'm theer i' the winder, an' let ma looök at 'im then,
'E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an' 'e's the Divil's oän sen.'

XIV.

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't do naw work an' all,
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an' poonch'd my 'and wi' the hawl,

[1] That's beyond every thing.

But she wur a power o' coomfut, an' sattled 'ersen o' my knee,
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till agëan I feel'd mysen free.

XV.

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk stood a-gawmin'[1] in,
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd istead of a quart o' gin;
An' some on 'em said it wur watter—an' I wur chousin' the wife,
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur it nobbut to saave my life;
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick ov 'is airm, an' 'e shaws it to me,
'Feëal thou this! thou can't graw this upo' watter!' says he.
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just as candles was lit,
'Thou moänt do it,' he says, 'tha mun breäk 'im off bit by bit.'
'Thou'rt but a Methody-man,' says Parson, and laäys down 'is 'at,
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, 'but I respecks tha fur that;'
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks down fro' the 'All to see,
An' 'e spanks 'is 'and into mine, 'fur I respecks tha,' says 'e;
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a wind fro' far an' wide,
An' browt me the booöts to be cobbled fro' hafe the coontryside.

[1] Staring vacantly.

XVI.

An' theer'e stans an' theer'e shall stan to my dying daäy;
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother kind of a waäy,
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts 'im, an' puts 'im back i' the light.

XVII.

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a quart? Naw doubt:
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi' an' fowt it out.
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I cared to taäste,
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur I'd feäl mysen cleän disgraäced.

XVIII.

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My lass, when I cooms to die,
Smash the bottle to smithers, the Divil's in 'im,' said I.
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if Sally be left aloän,
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke 'im afoor the Throän.

XIX.

Coom thou 'eer — yon laädy a-steppin' along the streeät,
Doesn't tha knaw 'er — sa pratty, an' feät, an' neät, an' sweeät?
Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe ammost spick-span-new,
An' Tommy's faäce is as fresh as a codlin 'at's wesh'd 'i the dew.

XX.

'Ere's our Sally an' Tommy, an' we be a-goin' to dine,
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-puddin'[1] an' Adam's wine;
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goä fur it down to the Hinn,
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood, noa, not fur Sally's oän kin.

THE REVENGE.

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET.

I.

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!'
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: 'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?'

II.

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.

[1] A pudding made with the first milk of the cow after calving.

But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain.'

III.

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

IV.

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
'Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set.'
And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet.'

v.

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

VI.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII.

And while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,

And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII.

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself and went
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX.

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more —
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world *before?*

X.

For he said 'Fight on! fight on!'
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said 'Fight on! fight on!'

XI.

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;

And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
'We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die — does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner — sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!'

XII.

And the gunner said 'Ay, ay,' but the seamen made reply:
'We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow.'
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

XIII.

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with a courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:

'I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!'
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV.

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honor down into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

THE SISTERS.

THEY have left the doors ajar; and by their clash,
And prelude on the keys, I know the song,
Their favorite — which I call 'The Tables Turned.'
Evelyn begins it 'O diviner Air.'

EVELYN.

O diviner Air,
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the glare,
Far from out the west in shadowing showers,
Over all the meadow baked and bare,
Making fresh and fair
All the bowers and the flowers,
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,
Over all this weary world of ours,
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that — you scarce could better that.
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

EDITH.

O diviner Light,
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with night,
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding showers,
Far from out a sky forever bright,
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,

Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,
Break, diviner Light!

Marvellously like, their voices — and themselves!
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the other,
As one is somewhat graver than the other —
Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle, whom
You count the father of your fortune, longs
For this alliance: let me ask you then,
Which voice most takes you? for I do not doubt
Being a watchful parent, you are taken
With one or other: tho' sometimes I fear
You may be flickering, fluttering in a doubt
Between the two — which must not be — which might
Be death to one: they both are beautiful:
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says
The common voice, if one may trust it: she?
No! but the paler and the graver, Edith.
Woo her and gain her then: no wavering, boy!
The graver is perhaps the one for you
Who jest and laugh so easily and so well.
For love will go by contrast, as by likes.

No sisters ever prized each other more.
Not so: their mother and her sister loved
More passionately still.
But that my best
And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes it,

And that I know you worthy every way
To be my son, I might, perchance, be loath
To part them, or part from them: and yet one
Should marry, or all the broad lands in your view
From this bay window — which our house has held
Three hundred years — will pass collaterally.

My father with a child on either knee,
A hand upon the head of either child,
Smoothing their locks, as golden as his own
Were silver, 'get them wedded' would he say.
And once my prattling Edith ask'd him 'why?'
Ay, why? said he, 'for why should I go lame?'
Then told them of his wars, and of his wound.
For see — this wine — the grape from whence it flow'd
Was blackening on the slopes of Portugal,
When that brave soldier, down the terrible ridge
Plunged in the last fierce charge at Waterloo,
And caught the laming bullet. He left me this,
Which yet retains a memory of its youth,
As I of mine, and my first passion. Come!
Here's to your happy union with my child!

Yet must you change your name: no fault of mine!
You say that you can do it as willingly
As birds make ready for their bridal-time
By change of feather: for all that, my boy,
Some birds are sick and sullen when they molt.
An old and worthy name! but mine that stirr'd

Among our civil wars and earlier too
Among the Roses, the more venerable.
I care not for a name — no fault of mine.
Once more — a happier marriage than my own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the plain.
The highway running by it leaves a breadth
Of sward to left and right, where, long ago,
One bright May morning in a world of song,
I lay at leisure, watching overhead
The aërial poplar wave, an amber spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landaulet
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me, show'd
Turning my way, the loveliest face on earth.
The face of one there sitting opposite,
On whom I brought a strange unhappiness,
That time I did not see.

Love at first sight
May seem — with goodly rhyme and reason for it —
Possible — at first glimpse, and for a face
Gone in a moment — strange. Yet once, when first
I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,
A moonless night with storm — one lightning-fork
Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I loiter'd there
The full day after, yet in retrospect
That less than momentary thunder-sketch
Of lake and mountain conquers all the day.

The Sun himself has limn'd the face for me.
Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well.
For look you here — the shadows are too deep,
And like the critic's blurring comment make
The veriest beauties of the work appear
The darkest faults: the sweet eyes frown: the lips
Seem but a gash. My sole memorial
Of Edith — no the other, — both indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro' sense and soul
And by the poplar vanish'd — to be found
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the tall
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping beechen boughs
Of our New Forest. I was there alone:
The phantom of the whirling landaulet
Forever past me by: when one quick peal
Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmering glades
Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,
My Rosalind in this Arden — Edith — all
One bloom of youth, health, beauty, happiness,
And moved to merriment at a passing jest.

There one of those about her knowing me
Call'd me to join them; so with these I spent
What seem'd my crowning hour, my day of days.
I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully,
The worse for her, for me! was I content?
Ay — no, not quite; for now and then I thought

Laziness, vague love-longings, the bright May,
Had made a heated haze to magnify
The charm of Edith — that a man's ideal
Is high in Heaven, and lodged with Plato's God,
Not findable here — content, and not content,
In some such fashion as a man may be
That having had the portrait of his friend
Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and says,
'Good! very like! not altogether he.'

As yet I had not bound myself by words,
Only, believing I loved Edith, made
Edith love *me*. Then came the day when I,
Flattering myself that all my doubts were fools
Born of the fool this Age that doubts of all—
Not I that day of Edith's love or mine —
Had braced my purpose to declare myself:
I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.
The golden gates would open at a word.
I spoke it — told her of my passion, seen
And lost and found again, had got so far,
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell — I heard
Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the doors —
On a sudden after two Italian years
Had set the blossom of her health again,
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd — there,
There was the face, and altogether she.
The mother fell about the daughter's neck,
The sisters closed in one another's arms,

Their people throng'd about them from the hall,
And in the thick of question and reply
I fled the house, driven by one angel face,
And all the Furies.
I was bound to her;
I could not free myself in honor — bound
Not by the sounded letter of the word,
But counter-pressures of the yielded hand
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,
Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her eyes
Upon me when she thought I did not see —
Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but could I wed her
Loving the other? do her that great wrong?
Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-morn?
Had I not known where Love, at first a fear,
Grew after marriage to full height and form?
Yet after marriage, that mock-sister there —
Brother-in-law — the fiery nearness of it —
Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood —
What end but darkness could ensue from this
For all the three? So Love and Honor jarr'd
Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise the full
High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up and down
Advancing nor retreating.
Edith wrote:
'My mother bids me ask' (I did not tell you —
A widow with less guile than many a child.
God help the wrinkled children that are Christ's
As well as the plump cheek — she wrought us harm,

Poor soul, not knowing) 'are you ill? (so ran
The letter) 'you have not been here of late.
You will not find me here. At last I go
On that long-promised visit to the North.
I told your wayside story to my mother
And Evelyn. She remembers you. Farewell.
Pray come and see my mother. Almost blind
With ever-growing cataract, yet she thinks
She sees you when she hears. Again farewell.'

Cold words from one I had hoped to warm so far
That I could stamp my image on her heart!
'Pray come and see my mother, and farewell.'
Cold, but as welcome as free airs of heaven
After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish, strange!
What dwarfs are men! my strangled vanity
Utter'd a stifled cry — to have vext myself
And all in vain for her — cold heart or none —
No bride for me. Yet so my path was clear
To win the sister.
Whom I woo'd and won.
For Evelyn knew not of my former suit,
Because the simple mother work'd upon
By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.
And Edith would be bridesmaid on the day.
But on that day, not being all at ease,
I from the altar glancing back upon her,
Before the first 'I will' was utter'd, saw
The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, passionless —

'No harm, no harm' I turn'd again, and placed
My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no word,
She wept no tear, but round my Evelyn clung
In utter silence for so long, I thought
'What will she never set her sister free?'

We left her, happy each in each, and then,
As tho' the happiness of each in each
Were not enough, must fain have torrents, lakes,
Hills, the great things of Nature and the fair,
To lift us as it were from commonplace,
And help us to our joy. Better have sent
Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,
To change with her horizon, if true Love
Were not his own imperial all-in-all.
Far off we went. My God, I would not live
Save that I think this gross hard-seeming world
Is our misshaping vision of the Powers
Behind the world, that make our griefs our gains.

For on the dark night of our marriage-day
The great Tragedian, that had quench'd herself
In that assumption of the bridesmaid — she
That loved me — our true Edith — her brain broke
With over-acting, till she rose and fled
Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn rain
To the deaf church — to be let in — to pray

Before *that* altar — so I think; and there
They found her beating the hard Protestant doors.
She died and she was buried ere we knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak. At once
The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that had sunn'd
The morning of our marriage, past away:
And on our home-return the daily want
Of Edith in the house, the garden, still
Haunted us like her ghost; and by and by,
Either from that necessity for talk
Which lives with blindness, or plain innocence
Of nature, or desire that her lost child
Should earn from both the praise of heroism,
The mother broke her promise to the dead,
And told the living daughter with what love
Edith had welcomed my short wooing of her,
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and death.

Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt the twins —
Did I not tell you they were twins? — prevail'd
So far that no caress could win my wife
Back to that passionate answer of full heart
I had from her at first. Not that her love,
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of love,
Had lessen'd, but the mother's garrulous wail
Forever woke the unhappy Past again,
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be my bride,
Put forth cold hands between us, and I fear'd

The very fountains of her life were chill'd;
So took her thence, and brought her here, and here
She bore a child, whom reverently we call'd
Edith; and in the second year was born
A second—this I named from her own self,
Evelyn; then two weeks—no more—she joined,
In and beyond the grave, that one she loved.
Now in this quiet of declining life,
Thro' dreams by night and trances of the day,
The sisters glide about me hand in hand,
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell
One from the other, no, nor care to tell
One from the other, only know they come,
They smile upon me, till, remembering all
The love they both have borne me, and the love
I bore them both — divided as I am
From either by the stillness of the grave —
I know not which of these I love the best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own true eyes
Are traitors to her; our quick Evelyn —
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they talk,
And not without good reason, my good son —
Is yet untouch'd: and I that hold them both
Dearest of all things — well, I am not sure —
But if there lie a preference either way,
And in the rich vocabulary of Love
'Most dearest' be a true superlative —
I think *I* likewise love your Edith most.

THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL.[1]

I.

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha my lass, fur new Squire coom'd last night.
Butter an' heggs — yis — yis. I'll goä wi' tha back: all right;
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I warrants the heggs be as well,
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya breäks the shell.

II.

Sit thysen down fur a bit: hev a glass o' cowslip wine!
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as thaw they was gells o' mine,
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire an' 'is darters an' me,
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver not took to she:
But Nelly, the last of the cletch,[2] I liked 'er the fust on 'em all,
Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es died o' the fever at fall:
An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord, but Miss Annie she said it wur draäins,
Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an' arn'd naw thanks fur 'er paäins.

[1] See note to 'Northern Cobbler.'

[2] A brood of chickens.

Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord my childer, I han't gotten none!
Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is 'and, 'an owd Squire's gone.

III.

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass: tha dosn' knaw what that be?
But I knaws the law, I does, for the lawyer ha towd it me.
'When theer's naw 'eäd to a 'Ouse by the fault o' that ere maäle —
The gells they counts fur nowt, and the next un he taäkes the taäil.'

IV.

What be the next un like? can tha tell ony harm on 'im lass? —
Naay sit down — naw 'urry — sa cowd! — hev another glass!
Straänge an' cowd fur the time! we may happen a fall o' snaw —
Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm, but I likes to knaw.
An' I 'oäps es 'e beänt booöklarn'd: but 'e dosn' not coom fro' the shere;
We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an' we haätes booöklarnin' ere.

V.

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an' niver lookt arter the land —
Whoäts or turmuts or taätes — 'e 'ed hallus a booök i' 'is 'and,

Hallus aloän wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh upo' seventy year.
An' booöks, what's booöks? thou knaws thebbe neyther 'ere nor theer.

VI.

An' the gells, they hedn't naw taäils, an' the lawyer he towd it me
That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he couldn't cut down a tree!
'Drat the trees,' says I, to be sewer I haätes 'em, my lass,
Fur we puts the muck o' the land, an' they sucks the muck fro' the grass.

VII.

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an' gied to the tramps goin' by—
An' all o' the wust i' the parish — wi' hoffens a drop in 'is eye.
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,
An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms, an' was 'untin' arter the men,
An' hallus a-dallackt[1] an' dizen'd out, an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,
While 'e sit like a graæt glimmer-gowk[2] wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is noëse,
An' 'is noëse sa grufted wi' snuff as it couldn't be scroob'd awaëy,
Fur atween 'is reädin' an' writin' 'e snifft up a box in a daäy,

[1] Overdrest in gay colors. [2] Owl.

An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor arter the birds wi' 'is gun,
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e leäved it to Charlie 'is son,
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,
Fur 'e warn't not burn to the land, an' 'e didn't take kind to it like;
But I eärs es 'e'd gie fur a howry[1] owd book thutty pound an' moor,
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen, sa I knaw'd es 'e'd coom to be poor;
An' 'e gied — I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow much — fur an owd scratted stoän,
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an' 'e got a brown pot an' a boän,
An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't goä, wi' good gowd o' the Queen,
An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt an' which was a shaame to be seen;
But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e niver not seed to owt,
An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks, an' booöks, as thou knaws, beänt nowt.

VIII.

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she lived she kep' 'em all clear,
Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed none of 'er darters 'ere;

[1] Filthy.

But arter she died we was all es one, the childer an' me,
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens we hed 'em to tea.
Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud talk o' their Missis's waäys,
An' the Missisis talk'd o' the lasses. — I'll tell tha some o' these daäys.
Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop, like 'er mother afoor —
'Er an' 'er blessed darter — they niver derken'd my door.

IX.

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till 'e'd gotten a fright at last,
An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's letters they foller'd sa fast;
But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e says to 'im, meek as a mouse,
'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I 'oäps es thou'll 'elp m a bit,
An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil I may saäve mysen yit.'

X.

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im 'Noa.'
'I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an' be dang'd if I iver let goa!

Coom! coom! feyther,' 'e says, 'why shouldn't thy booöks
be sowd?
I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe worth their weight i'
gowd.'

XI.

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd 'em, belong'd to the
Squire,
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leaves i' the middle to kindle
the fire;
Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd nigh to nowt at the
saäle,
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git 'im to cut off 'is
taäil.

XII.

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes — 'e were that outdacious at
'oäm,
Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out Hell wi' a small-tooth
coämb —
Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an' droonk wi' the farmer's
aäle,
Mad wi' the lasses an' all — an' 'e wouldn't cut off the taäil.

XIII.

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and a thurn be a-grawin'
theer,
I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the Maäy es I see'd it to-
year —

Theerabouts Charlie joompt — and it gied me a scare tother night,
Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i' the derk, fur it looökt sa white.
'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp!' — thaw the banks o' the beck be sa high,
Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un, thaw niver a hair wur awry;
But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an' Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,
So theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur 'e lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

XIV.

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur gone an' 'is boy wur deäd,
An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but 'e niver not lift oop 'is eäd:
Hallus a soft un Squire! an' 'e smiled, fur 'e hedn't naw friend,
Sa feyther an' son was buried togither, an' this wur the hend.

XV.

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the mooney, but hes the pride,
'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o' the tother side;
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, howsiver they praäy'd an' praäy'd,
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves their debts to be *paäid.*

:r the mou'ds rattled down upo' poor owd Squire i' the wood,
I cried along wi' the gells, fur they weänt niver coom to naw good.

XVI.

- Molly the youngest she walkt awaäy wi' a hofficer lad,
nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin, sa o' coorse she be gone to the bad!
Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet-'arts she niver 'ed none —
ıänge an' unheppen[1] Miss Lucy! we naämed her 'Dot an' gaw one!'
' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'out ony harm i' the legs,
' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eäd as bald as one o' them heggs,
' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as big i' the mouth as a cow,
' saw she mun hammergrate,[2] lass, or she weänt git a maäte onyhow!
ı' es fur Miss Annie es call'd me afoor my awn foälks to my faäce
ı hignorant village wife as 'ud hev to be larn'd her awn plaäce,'
es fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes now be a-grawin' sa howd,
ınaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt not fit to be towd!

[1] Ungainly, awkward. [2] Emigrate.

XVII.

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd Miss Annie to saäy
Es I should be talkin' ageän' em, es soon es they went waäy,
Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they went, an' our Nelly she gied me 'er 'and,
Fur I'd ha done owt fur the Squire an' 'is gells es belong'd to the land;
Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe neyther 'ere nor theer!
But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs fur huppuds o' twenty year.

XVIII.

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd, sa I hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,
An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an' they knaw'd what a hegg wur an' all;
Hugger-mugger they lived, but they wasn't that eäsy to pleäse,
Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they laäid big heggs es tha seeas;
An' I niver puts saäme[1] i' *my* butter, they does it at Willis's farm,
Taäste another drop o' the wine—tweänt do tha naw harm.

XIX.

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone;
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my nightcap wur on;

[1] Lard.

Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he coom'd last night sa laäte —
Pluksh ! ! ![1] the hens i' the peäs ! why didn't tha hesp the gaäte ?

IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

EMMIE.

I.

Our doctor had call'd in another, I never had seen him before,
But he sent a chill to my heart when I saw him come in at the door,
Fresh from the surgery-schools of France and of other lands —
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big merciless hands !
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes, but they said too of him
He was happier using the knife than in trying to save the limb,
And that I can well believe, for he look'd so coarse and so red,
I could think he was one of those who would break their jests on the dead,

[1] A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands to scare trespassing fowl.

And mangle the living dog that had loved him and fawn'd at his knee —
Drench'd with the hellish oorali — that ever such things should be!

II.

Here was a boy — I am sure that some of our children would die
But for the voice of Love, and the smile, and the comforting eye —
Here was a boy in the ward, every bone seem'd out of its place —
Caught in a mill and crush'd — it was all but a hopeless case:
And he handled him gently enough; but his voice and his face were not kind,
And it was but a hopeless case, he had seen it and made up his mind,
And he said to me roughly, 'The lad will need little more of your care.'
'All the more need,' I told him, 'to seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;
They are all his children here, and I pray for them all as my own:'
But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good woman, can prayer set a broken bone?'
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I know that I heard him say
'All very well — but the good Lord Jesus has had his day.'

III.

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd. It will come by and by.
O how could I serve in the wards if the hope of the world were a lie?
How could I bear with the sights and the loathsome smells of disease,
But that He said 'Ye do it to me, when ye do it to these'?

IV.

So he went. And we past to this ward where the younger children are laid:
Here is the cot of our orphan, our darling, our meek little maid;
Empty you see just now! We have lost her who loved her so much —
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensitive plant to the touch;
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often moved me to tears,
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have found in a child of her years —
Nay you remember our Emmie; you used to send her the flowers;
How she would smile at 'em, play with 'em, talk to 'em hours after hours!
They that can wander at will where the works of the Lord are reveal'd
Little guess what joy can be got from a cowslip out of the field;

Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are all they can know of the spring,
They freshen and sweeten the wards like the waft of an Angel's wing;
And she lay with a flower in one hand and her thin hands crost on her breast —
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire, and we thought her at rest,
Quietly sleeping — so quiet, our doctor said 'Poor little dear,
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she'll never live thro' it, I fear.'

v.

I walk'd with our kindly old Doctor as far as the head of the stair,
Then I return'd to the ward; the child didn't see I was there.

vi.

Never since I was nurse, had I been so grieved and so vext!
Emmie had heard him. Softly she call'd from her cot to the next,
'He says I shall never live thro' it, O Annie, what shall I do?'
Annie consider'd. 'If I,' said the wise little Annie, 'was you,
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help me, for, Emmie, you see,
It's all in the picture there: "Little children should come to me."'——

(Meaning the print that you gave us, I find that it always
can please
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with children about his
knees.)
'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but then if I call to the
Lord,
How should he know that it's me? such a lot of beds in the
ward!'
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she consider'd and
said:
'Emmie, you put out your arms, and you leave 'em outside
on the bed —
The Lord has so *much* to see to! but, Emmie, you tell it
him plain,
It's the little girl with her arms lying out on the counter-
pane.'

VII.

I had sat three nights by the child — I could not watch her
for four —
My brain had begun to reel — I felt I could do it no more.
That was my sleeping-night, but I thought that it never
would pass.
There was a thunder-clap once, and a clatter of hail on the
glass,
And there was a phantom cry that I heard as I tost about,
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the storm and the dark-
ness without;

My sleep was broken besides with dreams of the dreadful knife
And fears for our delicate Emmie who scarce would escape with her life;
Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd she stood by me and smiled,
And the doctor came at his hour, and we went to see to the child.

VIII.

He had brought his ghastly tools: we believed her asleep again —
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out on the counterpane;
Say that His day is done! Ah why should we care what they say?
The Lord of the children had heard her, and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS ALICE.

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that, which lived
True life, live on — and if the fatal kiss,
Born of true life and love, divorce thee not
From earthly love and life — if what we call
The spirit flash not all at once from out

This shadow into Substance — then perhaps
The mellow'd murmur of the people's praise
From thine own State, and all our breadth of realm,
Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds in light,
Ascends to thee; and this March morn that sees
Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom
Break thro' the yews and cypress of thy grave,
And thine Imperial mother smile again,
May send one ray to thee! and who can tell —
Thou — England's England-loving daughter —
Dying so English thou wouldst have her flag
Borne on thy coffin — where is he can swear
But that some broken gleam from our poor earth
May touch thee, while remembering thee, I lay
At thy pale feet this ballad of the deeds
Of England, and her banner in the East?

THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW.

I.

BANNER of England, not for a season, O banner of Britain, hast thou
Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the battle-cry!
Never with mightier glory than when we had rear'd thee on high
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly siege of Lucknow —

Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever we raised thee anew,
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

II.

Frail were the works that defended the hold that we held with our lives—
Women and children among us, God help them, our children and wives!
Hold it we might—and for fifteen days or for twenty at most.
'Never surrender, I charge you, but every man die at his post!'
Voice of the dead whom we loved, our Lawrence the best of the brave:
Cold were his brows when we kiss'd him—we laid him that night in his grave.
'Every man die at his post!' and there hail'd on our houses and halls
Death from their rifle-bullets, and death from their cannon-balls,
Death in our innermost chamber, and death at our slight barricade,
Death while we stood with the musket, and death while we stoopt to the spade,
Death to the dying, and wounds to the wounded, for often there fell
Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro' it, their shot and their shell,

Death — for their spies were among us, their marksmen were told of our best,
So that the brute bullet broke thro' the brain that could think for the rest;
Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and bullets would rain at our feet —
Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels that girdled us round —
Death at the glimpse of a finger from over the breadth of a street,
Death from the heights of the mosque and the palace, and death in the ground!
Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine! down, down! and creep thro' the hole!
Keep the revolver in hand! you can hear him — the murderous mole!
Quiet, ah! quiet — wait till the point of the pickaxe be thro'!
Click with the pick, coming nearer and nearer again than before —
Now let it speak, and you fire, and the dark pioneer is no more;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew!

III.

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many times, and it chanced on a day
Soon as the blast of that underground thunderclap echo'd *away,*

Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like so many fiends in their hell —
Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on volley, and yell upon yell —
Fiercely on all the defences our myriad enemy fell.
What have they done? where is it? Out yonder. Guard the Redan!
Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran
Surging and swaying all round us, as ocean on every side
Plunges and heaves at a bank that is daily drown'd by the tide —
So many thousands that if they be bold enough, who shall escape?
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall know we are soldiers and men!
Ready! take aim at their leaders — their masses are gapp'd with our grape —
Backward they reel like the wave, like the wave flinging forward again,
Flying and foil'd at the last by the handful they could not subdue;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

IV.

Handful of men as we were, we were English in heart and limb,
Strong with the strength of the race to command, to obey, to endure,

Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison hung but on him;
Still — could we watch at all points? we were every day fewer and fewer.
There was a whisper among us, but only a whisper that past:
'Children and wives — if the tigers leap into the fold unawares —
Every man die at his post — and the foe may outlive us at last —
Better to fall by the hands that they love, than to fall into theirs!'
Roar upon roar in a moment two mines by the enemy sprung
Clove into perilous chasms our walls and our poor palisades.
Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure that your hand be as true!
Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed are your flank fusillades —
Twice do we hurl them to earth from the ladders to which they had clung,
Twice from the ditch where they shelter we drive them with hand-grenades;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

V.

Then on another wild morning another wild earthquake outtore
Clean from our lines of defence ten or twelve good paces or more.

ifleman, high on the roof, hidden there from the light of the sun —
ne has leapt up on the breach, crying out: 'Follow me, follow me!' —
ark him — he falls! then another, and *him* too, and down goes he.
ad they been bold enough then, who can tell but the traitors had won?
oardings and rafters and doors — an embrasure! make way for the gun!
ow double-charge it with grape! It is charged and we fire, and they run.
raise to our Indian brothers, and let the dark face have his due!
hanks to the kindly dark faces who fought with us, faithful and few,
ought with the bravest among us, and drove them, and smote them, and slew,
hat ever upon the topmost roof our banner in India blew.

VI.

len will forget what we suffer and not what we do. We can fight!
ut to be soldier all day and be sentinel all thro' the night —
ver the mine and assault, our sallies, their lying alarms.
ugles and drums in the darkness, and shoutings and soundings to arms,

Ever the labor of fifty that had to be done by five,
Ever the marvel among us that one should be left alive,
Ever the day with its traitorous death from the loopholes around,
Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to be laid in the ground,
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract skies,
Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies,
Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,
Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would* not be heal'd,
Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife, —
Torture and trouble in vain, — for it never could save us a life.
Valor of delicate women who tended the hospital bed,
Horror of women in travail among the dying and dead,
Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment for grief,
Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief,
Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we knew —
Then day and night, day and night, coming down on the still-shatter'd walls
Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls —
But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

VII.

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what was told by the scout,
Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers?
Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!
All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,
Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,
Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,
Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers,
Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their tears!
Dance to the pibroch!—saved! we are saved!—is it you? is it you?
Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by the blessing of Heaven!
'Hold it for fifteen days!' we have held it for eighty-seven!
And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM.

(IN WALES.)

My friend should meet me somewhere hereabout
To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow —
I read no more the prisoner's mute wail
Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;
I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,
For I am emptier than a friar's brains;
But God is with me in this wilderness,
These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms, —
And God's free air, and hope of better things.
I would I knew their speech; not now to glean
Not now — I hope to do it — some scatter'd ears,
Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales —
But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wagg'd
They said with such heretical arrogance
Against the proud archbishop Arundel —
So much God's cause was fluent in it — is here
But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;
'Bara!' — what use? The Shepherd, when I speak,
Veiling a sullen eyelid with his hard
'Dim Saesneg' passes, wroth at things of old —
No fault of mine. Had he God's word in Welsh
He might be kindlier: happily come the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,
Least, for in thee the word was born again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living word,
Who whilom spakest to the South in Greek
About the soft Mediterranean shores,
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,
As good need was — thou hast come to talk our isle.
Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
Must learn to use the tongues of all the world.
Yet art thou thine own witness that thou bringest
Not peace, a sword, a fire.
What did he say,
My frighted Wiclif-preacher whom I crost
In flying hither? that one night a crowd
Throng'd the waste field about the city gates:
The king was on them suddenly with a host.
Why there? they came to hear their preacher. Then
Come cried on Cobham, on the good Lord Cobham;
Ay, for they love me! but the king — nor voice
Nor finger raised against him — took and hang'd,
Took, hang'd and burnt — how many — thirty-nine —
Call'd it rebellion — hang'd, poor friends, as rebels
And burn'd alive as heretics! for your Priest
Labels — to take the king along with him —
All heresy, treason: but to call men traitors
May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,
Red in thy birth, redder with household war,
Now reddest with the blood of holy men,
Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster —
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor sang
Fluttering the hawks of this crown-lusting line —
By firth and loch thy silver sister grow,[1]
That were my rose, there my allegiance due.
Self-starved, they say — nay, murder'd: doubtless dead.
So to this king I cleaved: my friend was he.
Once my fast friend: I would have given my life
To help his own from scathe, a thousand lives
To save his soul. He might have come to learn
Our Wiclif's learning: but the worldly Priests
Who fear the king's hard common-sense should find
What rotten piles uphold their mason-work,
Urge him to foreign war. O had he will'd
I might have stricken a lusty stroke for him.
But he would not; far liever led my friend
Back to the pure and universal church,
But he would not: whether that heirless flaw
In his throne's title make him feel so frail,
He leans on Antichrist; or that his mind,
So quick, so capable in soldiership,
In matters of the faith, alas the while!
More worth than all the kingdoms of this world,
Runs in the rut, a coward to the Priest.

[1] Richard II

Burnt — good Sir Roger Acton, my dear friend!
Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Beverley!
Lord give thou power to thy two witnesses!
Lest the false faith make merry over them!
Two — nay but thirty-nine have risen and stand,
Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,
Before thy light, and cry continually —
Cry — against whom?
Him, who should bear the sword
Of Justice — what! the kingly, kindly boy;
Who took the world so easily heretofore,
My boon companion, tavern-fellow — him
Who gibed and japed — in many a merry tale
That shook our sides — at Pardoners, Summoners,
Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries
And nunneries, when the wild hour and the wine
Had set the wits aflame.
Harry of Monmouth,
Or Amurath of the East?
Better to sink
Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling
Thy royalty back into the riotous fits
Of wine and harlotry — thy shame, and mine,
Thy comrade — than to persecute the Lord,
And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred Arundel
Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the flame,
The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his clerks

Into the suburb — their hard celibacy,
Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness, molten
Into adulterous living, or such crimes
As holy Paul — a shame to speak of them —
Among the heathen —
Sanctuary granted
To bandit, thief, assassin — yea to him
Who hacks his mother's throat — denied to him,
Who finds the Saviour in his mother tongue.
The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung down to swine —
The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who will come,
God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar.
Ah rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel, meant
To course and range thro' all the world, should be
Tether'd to these dead pillars of the Church —
Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,
Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart, and life
Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how long,
O Lord, how long!

My friend should meet me here.
Here is the copse, the fountain and — a Cross!
To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor knees.
Rather to thee, green boscage, work of God,
Black holly, and white-flower'd wayfaring-tree!
Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn
By this good Wiclif mountain down from heaven,
And speaking clearly in thy native tongue —
No Latin — He that that thirsteth, come and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking me
To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine arms,
God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and blood
And holier. That was heresy. (My good friend
By this time should be with me.) 'Images?'
'Bury them as God's truer images
Are daily buried.' 'Heresy. — Penance?' 'Fast,
Hairshirt and scourge — nay, let a man repent,
Do penance in his heart, God hears him.' 'Heresy —
Not shriven, not saved?' 'What profits an ill Priest
Between me and my God? I would not spurn
Good counsel of good friends, but shrive myself,
No, not to an Apostle.' 'Heresy.'
(My friend is long in coming.) 'Pilgrimages?'
'Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-dances, vice.
The poor man's money gone to fat the friar.
Who reads of begging saints in Scripture?' — 'Heresy' —
(Hath he been here — not found me — gone again?
Have I mislearnt our place of meeting?) 'Bread —
Bread left after the blessing?' how they stared,
That was their main test-question — glared at me!
'He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now He veils
His flesh in bread, body and bread together.'
Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd wolves,
'No bread, no bread. God's body!' Archbishop, Bishop
Priors, Canons, Friars, bell-ringers, Parish-clerks —
'No bread, no bread!' — 'Authority of the Church,
Power of the keys!' — Then I, God help me, I
So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two whole days —

I lost myself and fell from evenness,
And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever since
Sylvester shed the venom of world-wealth
Into the church, had only prov'n themselves
Poisoners, murderers. Well — God pardon all —
Me, them, and all the world — yea, that proud Priest,
That mock-meek mouth of utter Antichrist,
That traitor to King Richard and the truth,
Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.
Amen!
Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life
Be by me in my death.
Those three! the fourth
Was like the son of God. Not burnt were they.
On *them* the smell of burning had not past.
That was a miracle to convert the king.
These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel
What miracle could turn? *He* here again,
He thwarting their traditions of Himself,
He would be found a heretic to Himself,
And doom'd to burn alive.

So, caught, I burn.
Burn? heathen men have borne as much as this,
For freedom, or the sake of those they loved,
Or some less cause, some cause far less than mine;
For every other cause is less than mine.
The moth will singe her wings, and singed return,
Her love of light quenching her fear of pain —

How now, my soul, we do not heed the fire?
Faint-hearted? tut! — faint-stomach'd! faint as I am,
God willing, I will burn for Him.

Who comes?
A thousand marks are set upon my head.
Friend? — foe perhaps — a tussle for it then!
Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well disguised,
I knew thee not. Hast thou brought bread with thee?
I have not broken bread for fifty hours.
None? I am damn'd already by the Priest
For holding there was bread where bread was none —
No bread. My friends await me yonder? Yes.
Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? Is it far?
Not far. Climb first and reach me down thy hand.
I am not like to die for lack of bread,
For I must live to testify by fire.[1]

COLUMBUS.

CHAINS, my good lord: in your raised brows I read
Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.
We brought this iron from our isles of gold.

Does the king know you deign to visit him
Whom once he rose from off his throne to greet

[1] He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

Before his people, like his brother king?
I saw your face that morning in the crowd.

At Barcelona — tho' you were not then
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd herself
To meet me, roar'd my name; the king, the queen
Bade me be seated, speak, and tell them all
The story of my voyage, and while I spoke
The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace, be still!'
And when I ceased to speak, the king, the queen,
Sank from their thrones, and melted into tears,
And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and voice
In praise to God who led me thro' the waste.
And then the great 'Laudamus' rose to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean! chains
For him who gave a new heaven, a new earth,
As holy John had prophesied of me,
Gave glory and more empire to the kings
Of Spain than all their battles! chains for him
Who push'd his prows into the setting sun,
And made West East, and sail'd the Dragon's mouth,
And came upon the Mountain of the World,
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the Ocean, we,
We and our sons forever. Ferdinand
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic queen —
Of the Ocean — of the Indies — Admirals we —
Our title, which we never mean to yield,

Our guerdon not alone for what we did,
But our amends for all we might have done —
The vast occasion of our stronger life —
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in your Spain,
Lost, showing courts and kings a truth the babe
Will suck in with his milk hereafter — earth
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No.
We fronted there the learning of all Spain,
All their cosmogonies, their astronomies:
Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the golden guess
Is morning-star to the full round of truth.
No guess-work! I was certain of my goal;
Some thought it heresy; that would not hold.
King David call'd the heavens a hide, a tent
Spread over earth, and so this earth was flat:
Some cited old Lactantius: could it be
That trees grew downward, rain fell upward, men
Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and besides,
The great Augustine wrote that none could breathe
Within the zone of heat; so might there be
Two Adams, two mankinds, and that was clean
Against God's word: thus was I beaten back,
And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,
And thought to turn my face from Spain, appeal
Once more to France or England; but our Queen
Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses
Were half-assured this earth might be a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,
All glory to the mother of our Lord,
And Holy Church, from whom I never swerved
Not even by one hair's-breadth of heresy,
I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet — not all — last night a dream — I sail'd
On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights
Of my first crew, their curses and their groans.
The great flame-banner borne by Teneriffe,
The compass, like an old friend false at last
In our most need, appall'd them, and the wind
Still westward, and the weedy seas — at length
The landbird, and the branch with berries on it,
The carven staff — and last the light, the light
On Guanahani! but I changed the name;
San Salvador I call'd it; and the light
Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad sky
Of dawning over — not those alien palms,
The marvel of that fair new nature — not
That Indian isle, but our most ancient East
Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw
The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat
Thro' all the homely town from jasper, sapphire,
Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,
Jacinth, and amethyst — and those twelve gates,
Pearl — and I woke, and thought — death — I shall die —
I am written in the Lamb's own Book of Life

To walk within the glory of the Lord
Sunless and moonless, utter light — but no !
The Lord had sent this bright, strange dream to me
To mind me of the secret vow I made
When Spain was waging war against the Moor —
I strove myself with Spain against the Moor.
There came two voices from the Sepulchre,
Two friars crying that if Spain should oust
The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce
Soldan of Egypt, would break down and raze
The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon I vow'd
That, if our Princes harken'd to my prayer,
Whatever wealth I brought from that new world
Should, in this old, be consecrate to lead
A new crusade against the Saracen,
And free the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Gold? I had brought your Princes gold enough
If left alone ! Being but a Genovese,
I am handled worse than had I been a Moor,
And breach'd the belting wall of Cambalu,
And given the Great Khan's palaces to the Moor,
Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Prester John,
And cast it to the Moor: but *had* I brought
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir all
The gold that Solomon's navies carried home,
Would that have gilded *me?* Blue blood of Spain,
Tho' quartering your own royal arms of Spain,
I have not: blue blood and black blood of Spain,

The noble and the convict of Castile,
Howl'd me from Hispaniola; for you know
The flies at home, that ever swarm about
And cloud the highest heads, and murmur down
Truth in the distance — these out-buzz'd me so
That even our prudent king, our righteous queen —
I pray'd them being so calumniated
They would commission one of weight and worth
To judge between my slander'd self and me —
Fonseca my main enemy at their court,
They send me out *his* tool, Bovadilla, one
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast —
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed — who sack'd
My dwelling, seized upon my papers, loosed
My captives, feed the rebels of the crown,
Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing, gave
All but free leave for all to work the mines,
Drove me and my good brothers home in chains,
And gathering ruthless gold — a single piece
Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castillanos — so
They tell me — weigh'd him down into the abysm —
The hurricane of the latitude on him fell,
The seas of our discovering over-roll
Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,
With what was mine, came happily to the shore.
There was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God
Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O my lord,

I swear to you I heard his voice between
The thunders in the black Veragua nights,
'O soul of little faith, slow to believe!
Have I not been about thee from thy birth?
Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-sea?
Set thee in light till time shall be no more?
Is it I who have deceived thee or the world?
Endure! thou hast done so well for men, that men
Cry out against thee: was it otherwise
With mine own Son?'

And more than once in days
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when drowning hope
Sank all but out of sight, I heard his voice,
'Be not cast down. I lead thee by the hand,
Fear not.' And I shall hear his voice again —
I know that he has led me all my life,
I am not yet too old to work his will —
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,
I lying here bedridden and alone,
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and king —
The first discoverer starves — his followers, all
Flower into fortune — our world's way — and I,
Without a roof that I can call mine own,
With scarce a coin to buy a meal withal,
And seeing what a door for scoundrel scum
I open'd to the West, thro' which the lust,

Villany, violence, avarice, of your Spain
Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles —
Their kindly native princes slain or slaved,
Their wives and children Spanish concubines,
Their innocent hospitalities quench'd in blood,
Some dead of hunger, some beneath the scourge,
Some over-labor'd, some by their own hands, —
Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature, kill
Their babies at the breast for hate of Spain —
Ah, God, the harmless people whom we found
In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!
Who took us for the very Gods from Heaven,
And we have sent them very fiends from Hell;
And I myself, myself not blameless, I
Could sometimes wish I had never led the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic Queen
Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou comforted!
This creedless people will be brought to Christ
And own the holy governance of Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who bore the Cross
Thither, were excommunicated there,
For curbing crimes that scandalized the Cross,
By him, the Catalonian Minorite,
Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who believe
These hard memorials of our truth to Spain
Clung closer to us for a longer term
Than any friend of ours at Court? and yet
Pardon — too harsh, unjust. I am rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by my bed,
And I will have them buried in my grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are God's
Own voice to justify the dead — perchance
Spain once the most chivalric race on earth,
Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest realm on earth,
So made by me, may seek to unbury me,
To lay me in some shrine of this old Spain,
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain.
Then some one standing by my grave will say,
'Behold the bones of Christopher Colòn' —
'Ay, but the chains, what do *they* mean — the chains?' —
I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain.
Who then will have to answer, 'These same chains
Bound these same bones back thro' the Atlantic sea,
Which he unchain'd for all the world to come.'

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls in Hell
And purgatory, I suffer all as much
As they do — for the moment. Stay, my son
Is here anon: my son will speak for me
Ablier than I can in these spasms that grind
Bone against bone. You will not. One last word.

You move about the Court, I pray you tell
King Ferdinand who plays with me, that one,
Whose life has been no play with him and his
Hidalgos — shipwrecks, famines, fevers, fights,

Mutinies, treacheries — wink'd at, and condoned —
That I am loyal to him till the death,
And ready — tho' our Holy Catholic Queen,
Who fain had pledged her jewels on my first voyage,
Whose hope was mine to spread the Catholic faith,
Who wept with me when I return'd in chains,
Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,
To whom I send my prayer by night and day —
She is gone — but you will tell the King, that I,
Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd with pains
Gain'd in the service of His Highness, yet
Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage,
And readier, if the King would hear, to lead
One last crusade against the Saracen,
And save the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted: you have dared
Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor thanks!
I am but an alien and a Genovese.

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE.

(Founded on an Irish Legend. A.D. 700.)

I.

I WAS the chief of the race — he had stricken my father dead —
But I gather'd my fellows together, I swore I would strike off his head.
Each of them look'd like a king, and was noble in birth as in worth,
And each of them boasted he sprang from the oldest race upon earth.
Each was as brave in the fight as the bravest hero of song,
And each of them liefer had died than have done one another a wrong.
He lived on an isle in the ocean — we sail'd on a Friday morn —
He that had slain my father the day before I was born.

II.

And we came to the isle in the ocean, and there on the shore was he.
But a sudden blast blew us out and away thro' a boundless sea.

III.

And we came to the Silent Isle that we never had touch'd at before,
Where a silent ocean always broke on a silent shore,
And the brooks glitter'd on in the light without sound, and the long waterfalls
Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base of the mountain walls,
And the poplar and cypress unshaken by storm flourish'd up beyond sight,
And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an unbelievable height,
And high in the heaven above there flicker'd a songless lark,
And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull couldn't low, and the dog couldn't bark.
And round it we went, and thro' it, but never a murmur, a breath —
It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it quiet as death,
And we hated the beautiful Isle, for whenever we strove to speak
Our voices were thinner and fainter than any flitter-mouse-shriek;
And the men that were mighty of tongue and could raise such a battle-cry
That a hundred who heard it would rush on a thousand lances and die —
O they to be dumb'd by the charm! — so fluster'd with anger were they
They almost fell on each other; but after we sail'd away.

IV.

And we came to the Isle of Shouting, we landed, a score of wild birds
Cried from the topmost summit with human voices and words;
Once in an hour they cried, and whenever their voices peal'd
The steer fell down at the plow and the harvest died from the field,
And the men dropt dead in the valleys and half of the cattle went lame,
And the roof sank in on the hearth, and the dwelling broke into flame;
And the shouting of these wild birds ran into the hearts of my crew,
Till they shouted along with the shouting and seized one another and slew;
But I drew them the one from the other; I saw that we could not stay,
And we left the dead to the birds and we sail'd with our wounded away.

V.

And we came to the Isle of Flowers: their breath met us out on the seas,
For the Spring and the middle Summer sat each on the lap of the breeze;

And the red passion-flower to the cliffs, and the dark blue clematis, clung,
And starr'd with a myriad blossom the long convolvulus hung;
And the topmost spire of the mountain was lilies in lieu of snow,
And the lilies like glaciers winded down, running out below
Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy, the blaze of gorse, and the blush
Of millions of roses that sprang without leaf or a thorn from the bush;
And the whole isle-side flashing down from the peak without ever a tree
Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky to the blue of the sea;
And we roll'd upon capes of crocus and vaunted our kith and our kin,
And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and chanted the triumph of Finn,
Till each like a golden image was pollen'd from head to feet
And each was as dry as a cricket, with thirst in the middle-day heat.
Blossom and blossom, and promise of blossom, but never a fruit!
And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we hated the isle that was mute,
And we tore up the flowers by the million and flung them in bight and bay,
And we left but a naked rock, and in anger we sail'd away.

VI.

And we came to the Isle of Fruits: all round from the cliffs and the capes,
Purple or amber, dangled a hundred fathom of grapes,
And the warm melon lay like a little sun on the tawny sand,
And the fig ran up from the beach and rioted over the land,
And the mountain arose like a jewell'd throne thro' the fragrant air,
Glowing with all-color'd plums and with golden masses of pear,
And the crimson and scarlet of berries that flamed upon bine and vine,
But in every berry and fruit was the poisonous pleasure of wine;
And the peak of the mountain was apples, the hugest that ever were seen,
And they prest, as they grew, on each other, with hardly a leaflet between,
And all of them redder than rosiest health or than utterest shame,
And setting, when Even descended, the very sunset aflame;
And we stay'd three days, and we gorged and we madden'd, till every one drew
His sword on his fellow to slay him, and ever they struck and they slew;
And myself, I had eaten but sparely, and fought till I sunder'd the fray,
Then I bade them remember my father's death, and we sail'd away.

VII.

And we came to the Isle of Fire: we were lured by the light
from afar,
For the peak sent up one league of fire to the Northern
Star;
Lured by the glare and the blare, but scarcely could stand
upright,
For the whole isle shudder'd and shook like a man in a
mortal affright;
We were giddy besides with the fruits we had gorged, and
so crazed that at last
There were some leap'd into the fire; and away we sail'd,
and we past
Over that undersea isle, where the water is clearer than air:
Down we look'd: what a garden! O bliss, what a Paradise
there!
Towers of a happier time, low down in a rainbow deep
Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep!
And three of the gentlest and best of my people, whate'er I
could say,
Plunged head down in the sea, and the Paradise trembled
away.

VIII.

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where the heavens lean
low on the land,
And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd o'er us a sun-
bright hand,

Then it open'd and dropt at the side of each man, as I rose from his rest,
Bread enough for his need till the laborless day dipt under the West;
And we wander'd about it and thro' it. O never was time so good!
And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and the boast of our ancient blood,
And we gazed at the wandering wave as we sat by the gurgle of springs,
And we chanted the songs of the Bards and the glories of fairy kings;
But at length we began to be weary, to sigh, and to stretch and yawn,
Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the sunbright hand of the dawn,
For there was not an enemy near, but the whole green Isle was our own,
And we took to playing at ball, and we took to throwing the stone,
And we took to playing at battle, but that was a perilous play,
For the passion of battle was in us, we slew and we sail'd away.

IX.

And we came to the Isle of Witches and heard their musical cry—
'Come to us, O come, come' in the stormy red of a sky

Dashing the fires and the shadows of dawn on the beaut
shapes,
For a wild witch naked as heaven stood on each of
loftiest capes,
And a hundred ranged on the rock like white sea-birds i
row,
And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced on the wrecks in
sand below,
And a hundred splash'd from the ledges, and bosom'd
burst of the spray,
But I knew we should fall on each other, and hastily sa
away.

X.

And we came in an evil time to the Isle of the Dou
Towers:
One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved all over v
flowers:
But an earthquake always moved in the hollows under
dells,
And they shock'd on each other and butted each other v
clashing of bells,
And the daws flew out of the Towers and jangled
wrangled in vain,
And the clash and boom of the bells ran into the heart
the brain,
Till the passion of battle was on us, and all took sides v
the Towers,
There were some for the clean-cut stone, there were m
for the carven flowers,

And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd over us all the day,
For the one half slew the other, and after we sail'd away.

XI.

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who had sail'd with St. Brendan of yore,
He had lived ever since on the Isle and his winters were fifteen-score,
And his voice was low as from other worlds, and his eyes were sweet,
And his white hair sank to his heels and his white beard fell to his feet,
And he spake to me, 'O Maeldune, let be this purpose of thine!
Remember the words of the Lord when he told us "Vengeance is mine!"
His fathers have slain thy fathers in war or in single strife,
Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each taken a life for a life,
Thy father had slain his father, how long shall the murder last?
Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer the Past to be Past.'
And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard and we pray'd as we heard him pray,
And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and sadly we sail'd away.

XII.

And we came to the Isle we were blown from, and there on the shore was he,
The man that had slain my father. I saw him and let him be.

O weary was I of the travel, the trouble, the strife and the sin,
When I landed again, with a tithe of my men, on the Isle of Finn.

DE PROFUNDIS.

THE TWO GREETINGS.

I.

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Where all that was to be, in all that was,
Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddying light —
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Thro' all this changing world of changeless law,
And every phase of ever-heightening life,
And nine long months of ante-natal gloom,
With this last moon, this crescent — her dark orb
Touch'd with earth's light — thou comest, darling boy;
Our own; a babe in lineament and limb
Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man;
Whose face and form are hers and mine in one,
Indissolubly married like our love;
Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve
This mortal race thy kin so well, that men
May bless thee as we bless thee, O young life
Breaking with laughter from the dark; and may

The fated channel where thy motion lives
Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy course
Along the years of haste and random youth
Unshatter'd; then full-current thro' full man;
And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,
By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,
To that last deep where we and thou are still.

II.

I.

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that great deep, before our world begins,
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he will —
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that true world within the world we see,
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore —
Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,
With this ninth moon, that sends the hidden sun
Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling boy.

II.

For in the world, which is not ours, They said
'Let us make man' and that which should be man,
From that one light no man can look upon,
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and moons
And all the shadows. O dear Spirit half-lost
In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign

That thou art thou — who wailest being born
And banish'd into mystery, and the pain
Of this divisible-indivisible world,
Among the numerable-innumerable
Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite space
In finite-infinite Time — our mortal veil
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite One,
Who made thee unconceivably Thyself
Out of His whole World-self and all in all —
Live thou! and of the grain and husk, the grape
And ivy-berry, choose; and still depart
From death to death thro' life and life, and find
Nearer and ever nearer Him, who wrought
Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,
But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world.

THE HUMAN CRY.

I.

HALLOWED be Thy name — Halleluiah! —
Infinite Ideality!
Immeasurable Reality!
Infinite Personality!
Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluiah!

II.

We feel we are nothing — for all is Thou and in Thee;
We feel we are something — *that* also has come from Thee;

We know we are nothing — but Thou wilt help us to be.
Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluiah !

PREFATORY SONNET

TO THE 'NINETEENTH CENTURY.'

THOSE that of late had fleeted far and fast
To touch all shores, now leaving to the skill
Of others their old craft seaworthy still,
Have charter'd this; where, mindful of the past,
Our true co-mates regather round the mast;
Of diverse tongue, but with a common will
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil
And crocus, to put forth and brave the blast;
For some, descending from the sacred peak
Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued again
Their lot with ours to rove the world about;
And some are wilder comrades, sworn to seek
If any golden harbor be for men
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD.

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that knew you best,
Old Brooks, who loved so well to mouth my rhymes,
How oft we two have heard St. Mary's chimes !
How oft the Cantab supper, host and guest,

Would echo helpless laughter to your jest!
How oft with him we paced that walk of limes,
Him, the lost light of those dawn-golden times,
Who loved you well! Now both are gone to rest.
Yon man of humorous melancholy mark,
Dead of some inward agony — is it so?
Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past away!
I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:
Σκιᾶς ὄναρ — dream of a shadow, go —
God bless you. I shall join you in a day.

MONTENEGRO.

They rose to where their sovran eagle sails,
They kept their faith, their freedom, on the height,
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and night
Against the Turk; whose inroad nowhere scales
Their headlong passes, but his footstep fails,
And red with blood the Crescent reels from fight
Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone fight
By thousands down the crags and thro' the vales.
O smallest among peoples! rough rock-throne
Of Freedom! warriors beating back the swarm
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,
Great Tsernogora! never since thine own
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm
Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.

163344

TO VICTOR HUGO.

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears,
French of the French, and Lord of human tears;
Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit laurels glance
Darkening the wreaths of all that would advance,
Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy peers;
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of years
As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of France!
Who dost not love our England — so they say;
I know not — England, France, all man to be
Will make one people ere man's race be run:
And I, desiring that diviner day,
Yield thee full thanks for thy full courtesy
To younger England in the boy my son.

TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH.

Constantinus, King of the Scots, after having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937.

I.

[1] ATHELSTAN King,
Lord among Earls,
Bracelet-bestower and
Baron of Barons,
He with his brother,
Edmund Atheling,
Gaining a lifelong
Glory in battle,
Slew with the sword-edge
There by Brunanburh,
Brake the shield-wall,
Hew'd the linden-wood,[2]
Hack'd the battle-shield,
Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

[1] I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the *Contemporary Review* (November 1876).

[2] Shields of linden-wood.

II.

Theirs was a greatness
Got from their Grandsires —
Theirs that so often in
Strife with their enemies
Struck for their hoards and their hearths and their homes.

III.

Bow'd the spoiler,
Bent the Scotsman,
Fell the ship-crews
Doom'd to the death.
All the field with blood of the fighters
Flow'd, from when first the great
Sun-star of morning-tide,
Lamp of the Lord God
Lord everlasting,
Glode over earth till the glorious creature
Sunk to his setting.

IV.

There lay many a man
Marr'd by the javelin,
Men of the Northland
Shot over shield.
There was the Scotsman
Weary of war.

v.

We the West-Saxons,
Long as the daylight
Lasted, in companies
Troubled the track of the host that we hated,
Grimly with swords that were sharp from the grindstone,
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before us.

VI.

Mighty the Mercian,
Hard was his hand-play,
Sparing not any of
Those that with Anlaf,
Warriors over the
Weltering waters
Borne in the bark's-bosom,
Drew to this island,
Doom'd to the death.

VII.

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-stroke,
Seven strong Earls of the army of Anlaf
Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

VIII.

Then the Norse leader,
Dire was his need of it,

Few were his following,
Fled to his war-ship:
Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king in it,
Saving his life on the fallow flood.

IX.

Also the crafty one,
Constantínus,
Crept to his North again,
Hoar-headed hero!

X.

Slender reason had
He to be proud of
The welcome of war-knives —
He that was reft of his
Folk and his friends that had
Fallen in conflict,
Leaving his son too
Lost in the carnage,
Mangled to morsels,
A youngster in war!

XI.

Slender reason had
He to be glad of
The clash of the war-glaive —
Traitor and trickster

And spurner of treaties —
He nor had Anlaf
With armies so broken
A reason for bragging
That they had the better
In perils of battle
On places of slaughter —
The struggle of standards,
The rush of the javelins,
The crash of the charges,[1]
The wielding of weapons —
The play that they play'd with
The children of Edward.

XII.

Then with their nail'd prows
Parted the Norsemen, a
Blood-redden'd relic of
Javelins over
The jarring breaker, the deep-sea billow,
Shaping their way toward Dyefln[2] again,
Shamed in their souls.

XIII.

Also the brethren,
King and Atheling,
Each in his glory,

[1] Lit. 'the gathering of men.' [2] Dublin.

Went to his own in his own West-Saxonland,
Glad of the war.

XIV.

Many a carcass they left to be carrion,
Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin —
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear it, and
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to rend it, and
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to gorge it, and
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

XV.

Never had huger
Slaughter of heroes
Slain by the sword-edge —
Such as old writers
Have writ of in histories —
Hapt in this isle, since
Up from the East hither
Saxon and Angle from
Over the broad billow
Broke into Britain with
Haughty war-workers who
Harried the Welshman, when
Earls that were lured by the
Hunger of glory gat
Hold of the land.

ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH.

ILIAD, xviii. 202.

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and round
The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas flung
Her fringed ægis, and around his head
The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden cloud,
And from it lighted an all-shining flame.
As when a smoke from a city goes to heaven
Far off from out an island girt by foes,
All day the men contend in grievous war
From their own city, but with set of sun
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the glare
Flies streaming, if perchance the neighbors round
May see, and sail to help them in the war;
So from his head the splendor went to heaven.
From wall to dike he stept, he stood, nor join'd
The Achæans — honoring his wise mother's word —
There standing, shouted, and Pallas far away
Call'd; and a boundless panic shook the foe.
For like the clear voice when a trumpet shrills,
Blown by the fierce beleaguerers of a town,
So rang the clear voice of Æakidês;
And when the brazen cry of Æakidês
Was heard among the Trojans, all their hearts

Were troubled, and the full-maned horses whirl'd
The chariots backward, knowing griefs at hand;
And sheer-astounded were the charioteers
To see the dread, unweariable fire
That always o'er the great Peleion's head
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess made it burn.
Thrice from the dike he sent his mighty shout,
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans and allies;
And there and then twelve of their noblest died
Among their spears and chariots.

TO THE PRINCESS FREDERICA ON HER MARRIAGE.

O you that were eyes and light to the King till he past away
From the darkness of life—
He saw not his daughter—he blest her: the blind King sees you to-day,
He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Not here! the white North has thy bones; and thou,
Heroic sailor-soul,
Art passing on thine happier voyage now
Toward no earthly pole.

TO DANTE.

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLORENTINES.)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years, and grown
In power, and ever growest, since thine own
Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,
I, wearing but the garland of a day,
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.

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